

THE  
COMMON SCHOOL JOURNAL.

VOL. VI.

BOSTON, JULY 15, 1844.

No. 14.

WHISPERING IN SCHOOLS.

IN our last number, we made some remarks on the subject of STILLNESS IN SCHOOLS, and we adverted to the *suppression of whispering*, as one of the means of securing stillness. In doing this, we were led, incidentally, to make some observations on the means of preventing scholars from whispering.

In comparing the evils of whispering with the evil of measures sometimes used to prevent it, we did not mean to speak of the former as a light or trivial matter. Few things would strike an intelligent visiter more unpleasantly, on entering a schoolroom, than the perpetual buzz of whispering pupils; and there are but few which would more flagrantly invade a good teacher's ideas of order. With unlimited license on this subject, there would come in all manner of story-telling, joking, trafficking, reminiscences of old pleasures and schemings for new ones. In short, if *freedom of the tongue* were proclaimed in a school, all the pupils would have their oral auto-biographies and romances, at least, to say nothing of conspiracies for mutiny and rebellion.

Indeed, whispering in school is so mischievous a practice, that we fully endorse the following view of it, which is taken from the report of the school committee of Dracut for the year 1842-3:—

“Among the various elements of character, [in a school,] there is none more fraught with mischief, more insidious in its advances, more generally prevalent, and more difficult to suppress, than the practice of whispering. It may be thought that too much stress is laid on this practice, as some probably have the idea, that mere whispering in school is a matter of little consequence, and many parents might think their children were abused, should they receive any considerable correction for so trivial an offence. But your committee have formed their opinion from careful observation, and feel confident of its correctness. They have never known a school to make good improvement, where this practice was tolerated. No scholar can pursue his studies to any advantage, with a continual buzzing in his ears. No sound is more disagreeable and bewildering; and a schoolroom, in which the hum of

whispering is constantly heard, is not much more favorable to study than the interior of a cotton-mill in full operation. But the mere noise of whispering, bad as it is, is far from being the only evil with which it is attended. It always introduces a train of other evils, being itself the very medium, through which they are readily propagated and extended. 'Evil communications corrupt good manners;' and in no place are such communications more likely to be made than in a whispering school. It may be considered a sort of nursery of mischief. Scholars are ready to say, in a whisper, what they would be afraid or ashamed to speak aloud. Through this practice, every idle, impure, or mischievous thought, originating with a single scholar, is easily propagated till it becomes common throughout the school; schemes of sport, of mischief and insubordination, are concerted, matured, and carried into effect, which otherwise would never have had birth; and, in the habitual interchange of thought thus carried on among the scholars, they find sufficient employment, without having much to do with their books. Abolish it, then, and, as their minds must needs have employment, they will naturally turn their attention to their books, from which they will not fail to derive profitable instruction. There is certainly no excuse for the practice, as the proper business of scholars is not with each other, but with their books and their teachers. Let all whispering be entirely suppressed in our schools, and you dry up the most prolific source of disturbance and insubordination, and make one grand stride towards improvement."

Still we affirm, that there are evils worse than whispering; and, not unfrequently, the methods adopted to prevent the lesser evil lead, naturally and almost inevitably, to the greater. No one will deny that disingenuousness of character, deception, and falsehood, are worse than any noise of whispering, though it should emulate the roar of a steamboat when its steam is escaping. *Noise* is only a physical evil, even though one should be stunned by it; want of truth is moral evil.

Suppose that a teacher keeps school in one of our old-fashioned schoolhouses, where there are seats on three, perhaps on four sides of the room. In order to survey the whole school at once, he would need four faces,—a pair of eyes looking towards each one of the cardinal points. In such a house, the mere force of authority or fear of punishment will never prevent whispering. Peremptory prohibition, under such circumstances, makes violation and disobedience certain. The legislator is so unwise in his enactment, that he insures the breach of his own law. The offence is so easily committed, that the only way to suppress the act is to suppress the disposition to commit it. Though, occasionally, he should detect and punish an offender, yet, even while he is engaged in inflicting the correction, others will be engaged in repeating the offence. The chances of escape preponderate so decidedly over the chances of detection, that the temptation to indulgence will overmaster the fear of punishment.

When schoolhouses are of faultless construction, but the

schools are large, some teachers employ a spy, whom they station in some elevated and conspicuous place, to detect and report offenders. When visiting schools, we have watched such cases carefully, and we do not remember ever to have seen a sentinel who, if within whispering distance of those he was appointed to oversee, did not watch his opportunity, and whisper with some of them himself,—thus, at once, committing the double offence of breaking the law and betraying his trust.

The truth is, it is ordinarily too great a temptation for a scholar, to place him in the station of a monitor, where he has so many enticements, at least to suppress truth, if not to fabricate falsehoods. Suppose the sentinel sees his brother, sister, or a favorite playfellow, yielding to the temptation; how strong the inducement is, either to leave the offence unreported, or to turn away his eyes, and to satisfy his conscience by the thought that he did not *see* the transgression, although he *knows* it existed!

Sometimes this course is modified by keeping one whisperer on the look-out until he discovers another, whose punishment it is to take the place of spy until he can find a substitute for himself; and so on, making a rotation in the office of offender. This, of course, brings all the selfish feelings into vigorous play. It allows an escape from disgrace only on condition of transferring that disgrace to another. Put a man in a pillory, and condemn him to stay there until he can find a rogue as his substitute, and with what sort of Christian feelings will he regard the commission of an offence by another?

But the most unjustifiable of all modes to prevent whispering, which we have ever known, is the following:—Some teachers keep a book, in which to record all cases of whispering. They allow the day to pass without any notice of offences; but, when the school is about to close at night, they make a general proclamation for all those who have whispered during the day to rise and stand up, as a sign of confession. It is difficult to conceive of a greater snare to conscience than this. There may be individual children, whose monitor within has so commanding a voice that it will be obeyed, even under extraordinary circumstances of temptation; but we doubt whether there ever was a *whole school*, where this practice prevailed, in which lying,—*practical* lying,—was not a daily crime.

Consider the force of the temptation. On the one hand, the pupil is called upon by one who does not know,—or who, as he presumes, does not know,—whether he is innocent or guilty. He is called upon to avow himself an offender, in the presence of the whole school, and therefore to proclaim his own disgrace. He knows that disgrace, or punishment of some kind, is to follow confession. To obey conscience, he must put forth a positive effort of volition, so strong as to make him stand up conspicuously before the whole school,—an act which many natures would shrink from, even were it

followed by no disreputable consequences. On the other hand, he is only to sit still and say nothing, and he escapes. If this is not leading pupils—nay, thrusting them headlong—into temptation, what is? A teacher who ventures upon this plan, in our Common Schools or academies, can have no conception of the proper mode of cultivating conscience. He is yet to learn the first lesson in that highest and most sacred of all arts. He is yet to know that the conscience, like all the other faculties,—like the limbs and the muscles,—is at first weak, and therefore that the smallest possible demands must be made upon it, and, even then, only under favoring circumstances. To require of a child the performance of a difficult duty, under strong adverse temptations, is as absurd as to place a giant's burden upon an infant's shoulders.

However great, therefore, the evil of whispering is,—and we acknowledge it to be great,—no means should be taken to suppress it which expose the moral nature.

A good teacher will first strive to obtain the affection of his pupils. If practicable, he will separate those who are more inclined to offend, from their schoolmates, so that the temptation to transgress may cease with the opportunity. He will converse with the school on the evils of the habit, and obtain the consent of all those who have arrived at years of discretion for a voluntary abolition of the practice. After this, if cases occur, they must be dealt with according to the aggravation of their respective circumstances; for every intelligent person knows that the offence of whispering is not a *fixed, invariable quantity*, but that it may vary, and does vary, from one of a very venial character to one of the most aggravated that can be committed in a school.

Whispering is bad, but it is not intolerable; but a teacher who tempts his scholars to speak a lie, or act a lie, is unworthy of his trust.

---

**ACTIVITY.**—Don't be discouraged if you are unfortunate and are lying flat on your back. Rise, stand erect, and persevere in something else. Fall again, if you can't do better, but never yield to despondency. As fast as you fall, spring to your feet again, and there will always be hope. Lie still, lament that you are in the ditch, and you but cause rejoicing among your enemies, and no one will render you assistance. Dig out, work hard, persevere, with a determination to earn a comfortable living, and you shall have it. Scores will fly to your assistance, who would help to cover you with reproaches, if whining and lamenting over your misfortunes.

The whole secret of success in life is,—activity. To action,—to action,—and you will never see the day that you need the assistance which will not be rendered in some shape or another. Activity is the life of man, it makes him for this world, to say nothing of the world to come.—*Portland Tribune.*



[For the Common School Journal.]

No. VI.

## PREMIUMS.

[Most cordially do we welcome our old correspondent P. to our columns again. The series of articles, of which the following is a continuation, was commenced in the early numbers of the fifth volume of the Journal. These articles were written by a *wise man*; and every teacher, who will read them in a receptive spirit, will find, not only that new courage has been put into his heart, to sustain him in his labors, but that a torch has been placed in his hand, to enlighten his path of duty.—Ed.]

MR. EDITOR :—The mode of governing schools, and securing attention to lessons, by means of premiums and specific rewards, is hardly less objectionable in principle, and is more difficult in practice, than the use of the rod.

To the discriminating eye of the enlightened moralist, there is something like inconsistency in *hiring* a moral being, by specific rewards, to do his duty;—in hiring a child to do what he *ought* to do. What kind of *moral* training is it,—what sort of *moral* creations are formed,—when the educator, whether parent or teacher, has recourse to premiums,—specific and extraneous rewards,—to secure good behavior and good lessons? What sort of *moral* sentiments are set at work, and what kind of *moral* fabric is prepared, by the application of such means and motives?

In some families, children are *hired*,—tempted by specific rewards,—*to be good*; to be obedient to parents; to be kind to each other; to speak the truth; and to do whatsoever they *ought* to do. This may be very effectual, so far as the external act is concerned. It may make a very quiet, orderly household; but it is actually doing nothing towards making children truly good. It will never fit them for this world, much less for the kingdom of God. Children may love the *reward*, and be exceedingly careful to do nothing to forfeit it; but, after all that can be done in this way, they will not love obedience, duty, truth. Their affections will be no more in harmony with whatsoever is true, pure, lovely, and of good report. The proper exercise and development of all our faculties, physical, intellectual, and moral, carry with them their own reward; and on this should the educator rely to effect his purpose. It is not the immediate result, or the single act, or the first impression, which the enlightened educator chiefly regards, but the ultimate consequence and general habit. To him, that philosophy which teaches that we may bribe a child to eat, or take exercise, in order to be healthy,—to read and study, in order to grow wise,—to speak the truth, be temperate, kind, and practise the various virtues,—seems not in harmony with man's true nature. To a child, from the very constitution of his being, physical exercise is pleasant, as well as salutary. It brings its own reward, and it needs, and should

receive, no other. The same is true in regard to the exercise of our *intellectual* faculties,—the pursuit and attainment of knowledge. The gratification of attaining knowledge, and the pleasure and advantage of possessing it,—let these be the reward of the pupil. They are his appropriate reward; the natural incitements to industry, and the legitimate requital of it. On these let the teacher rely for success. To these, I think, he may safely trust.

The same principle holds in morals. The child has a *moral*, as well as a physical and intellectual nature, in the proper development and exercise of which, he will experience pleasure and advantage. Of this the teacher will avail himself; on this he will rely to perform his work. In families, filial obedience, kindness, veracity, and all the virtues, must be secured by moral motives,—moral training. They must be realized as the appropriate, unadulterated product of our moral nature. If filial respect, good will, brotherly kindness, and the like, are to bless the domestic circle, they must spring up as the natural and appropriate fruit of the moral affections. They must be drawn forth by training strictly *MORAL*. Let the motives by which you attempt to influence children,—to induce them to act or not to act,—be such as will stir their moral sentiments. Here, give them “line upon line, precept upon precept.” Especially, let them have the example,—the living example,—of *virtue*, continually before them. Let them see, and hold daily converse with, those who are consistent, bright, and living examples of truth and righteousness. But, above all, let them be thrown into situations, and be surrounded with circumstances, that will make strong and effectual appeals to their moral sympathies. This is the appropriate training for a *moral* agent. The child who obeys his father’s command under the promise of having a pair of new skates, receiving a guinea, or going to the next show, is hardly entitled to more credit than he who said, “I go, sir,” and went not. So, in school, all the real moral training you practise must be effected without specific rewards for specific acts, or a series of acts, of obedience. Let children enjoy all the rewards of obedience which flow naturally, and, we may say, necessarily, from well-doing. With these, teach them to be content. Let them not look for something superadded,—for something higher and better; for there is nothing higher and better. The ways of obedience have their reward. This children have a right to expect. This they will surely find. But it must be the reward of well-doing,—its natural and appropriate fruit,—not something above, beyond, or aside from it.

Besides direct appeals to the moral feelings of children, or their sense of duty, a teacher may hold up to the obedient and faithful pupil, as motives for right action, all the proper fruits and advantages of obedience on the one hand, and the evils of transgression on the other;—such as the securing of their own improvement and inward peace, their good standing and usefulness in the world and the gratification of those whom they love;—and, to the negligent and froward, the loss of self-

respect, self-approbation, public confidence and esteem, and all the advantages of reputation and place in society. And, though he may not hold up the expectation of especial and extraneous rewards as an inducement to order and study, yet I see no objection to letting it appear, when the occasion has passed, that he is not insensible to the good conduct of his pupils. If he may not hold out to his scholars the promise of a holiday, or an earlier release from school, on condition of good order and prompt lessons; yet, when he perceives they have made extra exertions, and things have gone well, I see no valid objection to manifesting his approbation by some indulgence of this kind. My meaning is, that I would make every thing that comes to the pupil in the character of a reward, or a premium, as much as possible, the NATURAL, CONSEQUENTIAL result of well-doing.

But, if a teacher's reliance to secure good order and good lessons is mainly on *premiums*, in the common acceptance of the term, he may, no doubt, through this instrumentality, produce immediate results in particular cases, both gratifying and astonishing. He may secure good order, and make some good scholars. But nothing is clearer to the discriminating philanthropist and judicious educator, than that he is, in this way, not only not *promoting*, but actually *hindering*, the very work which he would advance.

But, besides the objection to premiums on general principles as a means of education, there are ESPECIAL objections to them as instrumentalities in the schoolroom, some of which I will proceed to state:—

1. My first objection is, that premiums are frequently the cause of trouble to teachers, committees, parents, and children. Committees, teachers, and those whose duty it is to award premiums, are often greatly perplexed to know precisely the merits of the case, and to make a just decision between the claims of different candidates. This sometimes becomes a matter of very unpleasant solicitude and perplexity. It causes bitter disappointments, and ranklings of heart, among parents; and animosities, strifes, and lasting alienations, among children. It is impossible to satisfy all. They will not admit the justice of the decision. They cannot see the superior claims of the successful candidates; while the arbiters themselves will be often obliged to confess that the difference is very small.

Let us suppose that the school year has closed, the examination has passed, and the premiums are awarded. All have done well. Out of fifteen who have been aspiring to medals. (torturing nature all the while by rising up early and sitting up late,) seven only are successful, and these bear off the glittering prize. Here, then, are more sad hearts than joyful ones. And this I think no unfair representation of what often occurs. There are more hearts saddened, poisoned, than there are intellects quickened, and souls improved, by the process.

2. But, allowing that premiums are wise and good in the *abstract*, they are generally awarded on wrong principles.

They are generally promised to the best scholars; being held out as incitements to study, to secure good lessons, rapid progress, thorough attainments. He that recites the *most lessons* in the *best manner*, wins the prize. This promise will stimulate a few of the most talented in the class; on the others, it has little or no effect. That is, those only who need it least,—who are doing already, and without the hope of a premium, all they ought,—are unduly excited; while, by the dull, the indolent, those whose limited powers give them no hope of success, it is wholly disregarded. The effect is, that, upon three fourths of the class, it has no influence; while the other fourth, who are already doing too much, are goaded to greater and dangerous exertion. The ambitious and the excitable are tempted to study beyond their endurance. Thus, in instances not a few, has been laid the foundation of lasting, incurable disease. Many a constitution has been wrecked by late hours and long confinement, submitted to for a worthless medal. No amount of good lessons can outweigh, in my opinion, an evil of such magnitude. Future peace and future usefulness, all the blessings of health, are jeopardized and sacrificed for a mere bauble. On this point, let me quote the language of a late mayor of Boston. In an address to the city government, speaking of schools and examinations, he says:

“It has always been a natural object of ambition with the teachers and sub-committees, to have the school under their particular direction hold a high rank in the scale of intellectual progress. The opinion of wise men, and that of the public, as expressed by the action of the city council, have strengthened this feeling, by the offer of rewards and medals for success; and the anxiety of parents for the progress of their children has added strength to a passion, implanted by nature in the breasts of all of us with quite sufficient power, till, under the hotbed cultivation of our public and private schools, the children have been stimulated far beyond their strength; and their pale or flushed faces, and slender frames, bear witness to the debilitating influence of an over-excited brain. I have looked with pain and alarm upon the faded color, and the shadowy figures, of the more delicate sex, at the very moment when I have been listening to a brilliant recitation; and I have seen the proofs of their ambitious devotion to their studies, and the eager pursuit of a medal, or of rank in the class. To some moderate extent, this competition in the course of improvement is unquestionably necessary and desirable; but it seems to me that no one can witness the exhibition of highly excited feelings, and the visible effects of mental exertion upon the faces of the youth in our schools, without being satisfied that there is too much of it. It seems to me the duty of the conscientious patriot, not less than of the faithful guide of youth, to do what may be judicious to check the immoderate haste to obtain the object of pursuit, be it what it may, that is the undeniable characteristic of the times. It is not by violent and spasmodic effort, but by patient and moderate labor, that the husbandman secures the harvest. It is not by



torrents, but by the gentle rain and the soft dew, that the earth is fertilized. And, if we will but wait till, by a few years of observation, the mind has acquired some degree of maturity, that knowledge which can be derived from books will enter into it without toilsome effort, and in a much shorter space of time than if we impatiently and prematurely urge it upon a course of study for which the Creator has not prepared it."

To all this I heartily respond. The statement falls entirely within the limits of truth.

And, further, nothing is more unequal or unjust than the principle on which premiums are awarded. They should be given, not to those who actually accomplish the most, but to those who do best according to their *gifts* and *opportunities*. Suppose two boys belong to the same school;—one is endowed with two talents, the other with ten. The one is industrious, and does what he can; the other is indolent, playful, and troublesome. Yet the latter exhibits better lessons than the former, and carries off the prize. This is in effect rewarding *negligence*, rather than industry and true desert; for, evidently, the most deserving is the least successful. Truth, Justice say, let *him* be rewarded who has faithfully tried.

Again; premiums, if awarded at all, should be given rather to good conduct than to good scholarship. *Character* is more important than lessons. In this way, the stimulus would be made to operate upon a much larger number. All can behave well;—few possess power which, with any amount of labor, would make them first-rate scholars.

But there are, to my mind, insuperable objections to holding out specific premiums for good conduct. The very proposition to hire boys to be good is an absolute moral solecism. Suppose the father of a family promises to each of his children a new suit of clothes at the end of the quarter, on condition he behaves well; or a dollar every day he brings home a merit-ticket; and that his children, lured by so tempting an offer, offend not in word or deed. Is any one weak enough to believe that they have been receiving any proper moral training under such an influence? Nay, verily! Carry this discipline into the schoolroom; will it work any better there? Is there any more reason for it in the schoolroom than in the family? Not at all. The judicious educator should operate upon moral beings by moral motives,—motives adapted to their *moral principles*, and not addressed to their cupidity or any of the lower sentiments. He should teach them to look for their reward in the *legitimate and proper* fruits of well-doing.

If we would do the work of moral education, we must exercise the moral faculties,—we must appeal to the moral nature; else all the product will be outward show,—the mere semblance of obedience. I will not enlarge on this point. If premiums must be given, I am clearly of the opinion that they should be given to those who make the most exertion, and not to those who actually accomplish the greatest amount of labor. Some regard might then be paid to the natural temperament

and disposition of the candidate,—to the advantages he had enjoyed, the obstacles he had to surmount, the conflicts to endure,—and, indeed, to everything which has an influence upon his progress and the formation of his character.

But our article is extending to so great a length that we must postpone the residue of our remarks on this subject until another number. P.

---

#### LETTER FROM ROME.

[The following extracts from a letter of a distinguished educator, giving an account of certain schools in Rome, will be read with great interest.—Ed.]

THERE is not a school in Rome which must not be considered as a beacon to warn, rather than a light to guide, the inquirer. There are three schools in Rome commonly called the schools of the *Ignorantelli*, or the *Frères Ignorantins*, in French,—a term which seems to have been derived from the notion, once general, and not yet extinct, that the teachers must know nothing beyond the branches they teach, namely, reading, writing, and arithmetic. I say the notion is not yet extinct; for one of the masters, in a conversation with me, maintained the doctrine, and asserted that he would prefer that his sub-teachers should know nothing beyond the branches they taught,—should not read or study anything else, but spend their whole time in teaching, and in their devotions.

These three schools have thirteen hundred day scholars, who come at nine in the morning, and remain until noon,—return at two, and remain until six,—five days in the week, and who are taught gratuitously. The schoolhouses, like most of those in Rome, have an aisle in the middle of each room, with two or three rows of benches, rising a little above each other, on each hand. In front is a small stage, on which is the master's desk; and on each side of the door is a seat, much elevated above all the others, for the *dux*, or leader of the day,—the highest boy of the highest class. Projecting from the wall on both sides, there is a flag-staff, from which hangs over the heads of the boys a banner, one with the arms and devices of Rome, the other with those of Carthage. Those ranged under the one are for the time Romans, those opposite them are Carthaginians. The contest is for superiority in the lessons, and the victors enjoy the triumph of a parade, with their banner flying, and sometimes with music.

In all the Roman schools you find this division of the seats, and with the avowed intent of pitting the boys against each other. I have seen scores of banners, but never observed any other than those of Rome and Carthage,—an extraordinary testimony which Romans still give to the superiority of the Carthaginians over all their other enemies. The high seat, each side of the door, is the post of the commander of each army,—the boy who stands and sits highest in the class.

Emulation is the main spring in the Roman, I may say in

the Italian schools; it is excited in every possible form, by banners, by music, by badges, by prizes of various kinds. If the masters had a hundredth part of the emulation among themselves, and with those of other countries, which they inspire in their pupils, the schools would become tolerable, instead of being, as they are, among the most wretched in the world.

But to return to the *Scuolai degli Ignorantelli*. Each master has about fifty scholars in his room, and confines himself to a class for one year. The first teaches the elements of reading; the next, reading and writing; the higher one adds arithmetic. The boys go to school from three to seven years; they are, almost all of them, of active nervous temperaments, and endowed with great natural vivacity and talent; nevertheless, they are *prevented* from becoming even tolerable readers and arithmeticians,—a fact which implies either great talent or great stupidity on the part of the masters. As for writing, I must confess I never saw any thing like it, even in the German schools; the system seems to me very slovenly, and the time consumed enormous; nevertheless the result is beautiful. A boy, in one of these schools, who can write small hand and capitals with ease and with the smoothness and grace of copper-plate, would be called only a good writer; to be a *very* good one, he must, with a flourish of his pen, surround his page with spread-eagles, with dragons, and crocodiles; and if he aspire to any extraordinary distinction, he must bring in a human head and face, the features of which have a likeness to somebody or other. You would naturally suppose they must be taught to draw; but they are not; their power of execution comes probably from a greater natural endowment of those faculties by which we take cognisance of forms and outlines, and by which we imitate them. The reading is in the most whining, monotonous tone imaginable. I have heard hundreds of the best readers in the Roman schools; I have heard the masters read, and the priests read; and I have never heard one who did not whine or sing, except the boys in the Jews' school.

As for arithmetic, you will hardly credit the assertion, that living, active boys can be allowed the use of a slate and pencil for so many years, and yet be prevented from advancing beyond the very threshold of arithmetic; and yet such is the case in these schools. Questions which could be solved by a simple application of the Rule of Three, puzzled the best cipherers, if they were asked out of the common form.

The discipline of the schools seems paternal and good; the masters have the power of corporal punishment, but almost never use it; in fact, I think I may say *never* in these three schools. They use emulation, shame, exhortation and premiums of various kinds, but not the rod. Perhaps their character and dress of priests adds to their power; the boys regard them as spiritual teachers, as well as intellectual ones; and often, when they come to the desk, they kneel and raise their hands. This, indeed, you see in most of the Roman schools. I have sometimes, on going into one of these schools, found a boy on his

knees on the stone side of the door, others on their knees on the cold stone floor of the passage ways, muttering over prayers with more rapidity than devotion; and, on my exit, after perhaps a half an hour, found them still on their marrow bones, the penance and the prescribed number of prayers not having been accomplished. This was for some offence which with us would have been punished by the ferula. You will easily calculate, without a slate and pencil, the increase of esteem with which this process will make a boy regard the great privilege of approaching his Maker in prayer. It reminds me of a pious old lady at home, who said to a boy, "There now! I meant to have let you stay at home from *meeting* this cold afternoon, but since you have been so naughty you *shall go*;—and, if you don't behave yourself, I'll send you to lecture this evening, too!" The little Yankee loved the meetinghouse as much more, as the young Roman does his prayers.

It is often said that the government and the teachers in Rome endeavor to manufacture popularity by keeping up the schools, while they take very good care not to let the pupils have any instruction which will really develop their minds, and give intelligence and strength to their character. This, I have no doubt, is true of the government, which, without going to any except the most trifling expense for public instruction, contrives to keep every instructor under surveillance and in perfect subjection; but I am sure it is not true of all the masters, or even of a majority of them. Many are earnest and honest teachers, but they are in a state of deplorable ignorance of the science of teaching. The slightest conversation with them betrays this. For instance, I have asked many what they thought would be the success of trying to teach a child to read in words, without spending so long a time upon the alphabet and the syllables; to which the first reply was that sort of stare of astonishment which would follow a grave question as to whether a child could learn to swallow food without first opening his mouth to eat; and when they are perfectly sure you are serious, they reply, "Why, how on earth can a child learn to read in any other way than by learning the alphabet and syllables?" One of the head masters, in reply to a question of mine whether he could not relieve the lassitude and weariness of his pupils by some gymnastic exercises in the open air, manifested great astonishment at the idea of gymnastic exercises; he had no conception of the thing; and another, after some reflection, asked if some of the institutions in Germany had not recently made some experiments in this way. But what should they know about physiology, or even the laws of physics,—they, poor pallid priests, who from their tenderest years were forced to sit like automata, or to move like machines; whose boyhood was passed in seclusion, who never moved out of doors except to march in regular companies and in military order, under huge cocked hats, with their legs cramped in breeches and long stockings, and with a ponderous black cloak upon their backs, or long stripes of bombazine or flannel hanging like streamers from their collars and falling down to their heels? What



Five Blocks

4 Cubes  
bought

57	$R$	58	
56		59	
	$R a$	59	
69		70	
69		70	
	$R b$		
92		93	
95	$R c$	93	
96		94	$R e$
97		95	
98	$R d$		
99			

Three Blocks.  
3 Cubes high

Four Blocks.  
= Cubes high

3 Cubes high

[illegible][illegible]

42	41	40	39	38	37	36	35	34	33	32	31	30	29	28	27	26	25	24	23	22	21	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Figure 1 shows a 3D coordinate system with axes  $x$ ,  $y$ , and  $z$ . A rectangular prism is defined by the planes  $x=0$ ,  $x=a$ ,  $y=0$ ,  $y=b$ ,  $z=0$ , and  $z=h$ . The top surface at  $z=h$  is divided into four quadrants by the  $y$ -axis. The quadrants are labeled  $M_a$  (top-left),  $M_b$  (top-right),  $M_c$  (bottom-left), and  $M_d$  (bottom-right). The  $y$ -axis is labeled  $y$  at the top and  $y$  at the bottom. The  $x$ -axis is labeled  $x$  at the right and  $x$  at the left. The  $z$ -axis is labeled  $z$  at the top and  $z$  at the bottom. The dimensions  $a$ ,  $b$ , and  $h$  are indicated along the respective axes.

11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100										
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100

44	q		45
44	6	<i>J</i>	45
45			a
	<i>Pb</i>		
99			hh
66	<i>I</i>		hh
<i>p d</i>			<i>Pc</i>
66	<i>p I</i>		45

33	Q	72
35	Q	74
35.5	Q	75 + 68.68
67.67	Q	67.5
66	Q	66
66	Q	66
67	Q	67

[illegible]

*Tim*

*hull's Liebes*

61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40

[illegible]

		K
--	--	---

$K_c$

*Cubecubura*

### Two Cubes

Two Blocks  $1\frac{1}{2}$  Cubes high.

				75	u
					He
				64	t
t	u		75	64	t
					Ha
H			Hd	66	67
	v		74	66	67
					He
				74	

[illegible]

y	r
Gd	
a	q
a	q
Ga	
b	c
Gc	

9	r	r	
G	Ge	9	
	s	b	

87	l
11	k
c a	
10	12



should they know of the needs of childhood, who seem to think that fun and frolic are inventions of the Devil; that sinners alone are to shout and laugh; and that God made the green sward only for the children of the wicked to tumble upon,—the pure stream for the unjust alone to swim in,—the swift horse for the worldly alone to mount upon? What know they of the necessity of stimulating the brain by highly oxygenated blood forced bounding through the arteries by the alternate contraction and relaxation of hundreds of muscles,—they, whose flesh is as flabby as blown veal, whose whole growth runs to the adipose, who have not a hard muscle in their body except the flexors and extensors of their legs, and who, if ever in high health, have only the obesity of the stalled ox, or the stuffed capon?

These reflections may apply to the teachers of Italy generally who are of the priestly order, and I make them more in the spirit of sorrow than of reproach, for as individuals they are not to blame; they are moulded into their present shape by the institutions in which they are reared, and are not responsible for their mental organization, any more than for their physical peculiarities. I have found among them many honest and zealous men, but who, never lifting their heads above the surface of the stream of life, do not perceive, that, while the rest of the human race is sweeping onward towards improvement, they are not only stationary, but even retrograding. But I must close ere I fatigue you.

Truly yours,

S. G. H.

---

#### DRAWING.

##### SCHMID TO THE TEACHER.

It has often been said, and every unprejudiced person will believe, that, as the direct aim of all drawing is the imitation of nature, instruction should be given, from the beginning, upon real objects. But this has been unpractised, nor has it been, on a large scale, practicable. Teachers have allowed *fac similes* to be made from patterns, instead of cultivating the talent for putting real objects into drawing, because they have not seen how to reduce to a system, communicable to pupils, the principles of drawing from nature. My own experience has proved the worse than fruitlessness of this *fac simile* method of drawing from patterns; and, through much labor, and many mistakes, I have at last become convinced, that an entirely progressive course of exercises upon real objects is not only the most desirable, but a practicable method.

I could write a whole book, and it would not be an uninteresting one, should I describe all that I have tried, changed, and discarded, before I completed the present series of exercises. At last I have come to my present simplicity of plan, using a box of blocks,—which may be so arranged as to form a rectangular pillar,—together with a niche, and a cylindrical body similar to a millstone. By means of these few blocks, the pupil may learn to draw from nature in a very short time, with perfect correctness. The blocks used are proportioned

to an *inch cube*,—that is, a six-sided figure, each side being one inch square:—

2 blocks of one cube, . . . . .	marked severally	H and B.
2 " of a half cube, . . . . .	" "	J, A.
2 " of a cube and a half, " "	" "	G, C.
4 " of two cubes, . . . . .	" "	E, F, D, N.
3 " of three cubes, . . . . .	" "	L, M, T.
5 " of four cubes, . . . . .	" "	O, P, Q, R, S.
1 block of five cubes, . . . . .	" "	K.

These blocks must be marked also in the corners, according to the Plate and the following directions: Having marked one of the blocks of *one cube*, on one face, B, turn it over from right to left, and, reversing the side, as in the Plate, mark the side now facing you *Be*; turn it again to the left, still reversed, and mark *Bd*; reverse it, and turn it again to the left, and mark *Ba*. *Bb* and *Bc* stand in the relation to *Ba* indicated in the Plate. Mark all the other blocks according to the Plates. Across many of them are drawn lines marked with letters; the points are also marked with letters. The proportional distances of these lines and points are as follow:—

On block S, side *Sc*, the line *aa bb* must be one-sixth of the length of the whole block from the numbers 62 97. On block Q, side *Qb*, *cc* is three-sevenths of the line 86 85. On block P, side P, the mark *kg* is exactly in the middle, and the point *i* exactly in the middle between *h* and 43. On block L, side *La*, the point *m* is as far from 18 as 34 is. On block M, side *Mc*, the mark *ef* is at one-third of the whole length. On block T, side T, the point *n* is as far from *r* as *s* is. On block F, side *Fc*, the mark *kl* is one-third of the whole length from 77 78. On block A, the mark *cd* is exactly in the middle between *b* and *c*. On block K, side K, the upper mark is twice as far from 3 as 4 is; the second mark is once and a half as far from the upper stroke as 3 is from 4; and the third just as far from the second as 3 from 4.

When the blocks are marked thus far, mark the corners according to the Plate, always holding the central letters *upright* before you.

New beginners should mark the blocks, in the first instance, with chalk only, or with a lead pencil, so that, if any mistake shall be found to exist, the erroneous marks can be easily effaced.

The development of the pupil's power of drawing begins with the simplest and smallest part,—the half cube,—whose face, marked A, is divided into two squares. Not that I would give him the whole half cube for the first lesson. Eight or ten lessons will be required, before the pupil will be able to draw the half cube in perspective. The lessons are adapted to the least capable pupil of a school. My first lesson is, after a pupil has made one point on his paper, to teach him to place another point perpendicularly over it. I do not say at what distance above, but only perpendicularly over it. If a child cannot do this, his power of drawing has not yet burst from the bud.



The next step is to draw between the two points, placed perpendicularly with respect to each other, a hair line, unshaded and delicate.

The next step is to place a point horizontally opposite the perpendicular, as far from the upper point as the upper point is above the lower. This is more difficult, and may require repeated trials. Then comes the joining of these points by a hair line.

A fourth step is to place a point perpendicularly under the third point, and horizontally opposite the first, joining them by a hair line.

The child now sees a square standing upon his paper, and the feeling of success fills him with new courage to draw the second square. In this gradual manner the pupil is carried on from step to step.

At first, the pupil should only draw the front faces of the blocks, and he should be able to do this very accurately before the first lesson in perspective is given, at which time the power of measuring with his eye will be a necessary aid to his success. In the perspective exercises, the scholar is to be made to see how an object appears to him. This is not to be done by mathematical rules, which would weaken his perceptive powers, by leaving them idle, and fostering indolence and inattention. But, by means of a single coarse thread, his eye and eyesight will be sharpened, and he will actually see the distances and fore-shortenings, and transfer them to the paper, without the mechanical help of mathematical diagrams. A precise harmony of the perspective distances thus found, with the mathematical rules of perspective, will be soon attained; but it cannot be otherwise than *gradually* attained, without sacrificing something more important, namely, the perfect education of his eye. By this education of the eye, he will soon appreciate how a natural object *appears*, which is a very difficult thing. In the end, he will make his drawings so exact, by the mere help of the thread, that no mathematical perspective drawer can excel him in precision.

When the scholar has drawn all the lessons on the rectilinear blocks, and thus learned all the possible relations and fore-shortenings of the lines, then exercises on the niche and mill-stone should follow. By progressive lessons on these, he will become able to draw all the outlines presented in nature and art, in perfect perspective.

After a complete dexterity in outline is acquired, I proceed to the art of shading.

First, let the pupil shade a ball, entirely out of his own mind. The rule for this is very simple; namely, every line, shadow, and light, grows weaker in the distance. When the nearest point falls into the shadow, let the depth of the shade be made as great as the materials you are using will admit. It will then be easy to shade all the rest in perfect harmony with this depth.

By adhering to this rule, the pupil will attain a perfect medium between shadow and light, now seldom attained in any picture or drawing. This exact graduating of the shadow wonderfully sharpens the attention and patience of the pupil.

To explain the technics of shadowing, I show the pupil how he must make the first point, and how these points which constitute the shading must be made more coarse-grained in the direction of the deeper shadow, more fine-grained in the direction of the lighter. The perspective is also considered here, and the scholar may imitate even the air which lies between us and every object, conformably to nature, which is the perfection of art.

But no blocks or niches *constitute* my mode of teaching. Some persons hurry over these lessons, perhaps, and say, "Schmid's method is not a good one." But my mode consists of this law for the teacher: *Give such lessons to each scholar as will gradually unfold his own powers of observation as well as execution*; and of this law for the scholar: *Do everything with all your mind and soul*. Blocks and niches are the most useful means which I have been able to find, to help towards the fulfilment of these laws, and, as such, may be of great importance, but they are not ultimate. Development of the thinking powers, strengthening of the perceptive faculties, and a true, useful, cultivated skill in drawing, are the objects to be attained. And these will be obtained by the fulfilling of the above laws, and, as I think, inevitably, by a use of these means. This method, beginning at such an humble point of attainment, gives to the child, from the first moment, a feeling of success, and this feeling operates upon the child with irresistible power. The best means of exciting this feeling is neither to require more of him than he can, at a given time, accomplish successfully, nor to feed his indolence and weaken his powers by too easy requisitions. Let us require, at every step, the perfection of that step. Let no minute be devoted to the drawing lesson beyond the time when the pupil can give to it his whole attention and his whole heart, even if that time be not more than ten minutes.

The nineteen rectilinear blocks, mentioned above, are the first requisite. These should be made, and kept in a box; and each pupil should have his own box. If, at the same time, every pupil should have a book, the classes could make progress without the immediate superintendence of the teacher; though it would be requisite, even in this case, for the teacher to keep up a careful watch, and examine the performances at every stage, that there should be no carelessness. I would almost prefer that the teacher should not know how to draw; for, though he has the skill of a Raphael, and does not go on with his pupils step by step, he will not do them the good that a faithful adherence to the gradual exercises would do. But I would have him be a *teacher*,—a man who is wise in this particular vocation, and incapable of sacrificing, or of *happening* to sacrifice, the highest regard for the welfare of his scholars to his own deficiencies or passions.

---

[THE COMMON SCHOOL JOURNAL; published semi-monthly, by WILLIAM B. FOWLE AND N. CAPEN, No. 138½ Washington Street, up stairs, (opposite School Street,) Boston. HORACE MANN, Editor. Price, One Dollar a year, payable in advance.]